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In Relation to

Protestant Dissenters:

IN A

LETTER

To the Right Reverend,

The Bishop of ——,

Quod quicunq; legat, si quis legat, optimet ante
Compositum quo sit Tempore, —— Ov. de Trist.

By an impartial Hand.

LONDON,
Printed for J. *Baker*, at the *Black Boy* in *Paternoster-Row*, 1714. Price 4d.

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Interest of England,

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THE INTEREST of ENGLAND, &c.

To the Right Reverend The Biſhop of ———

My LORD,

BOth Your Friends and Your Enemies will undoubtedly agree, that the preſent Tract ought of Right to be dedicated to Your Lordſhip; and that it does in ſome Meaſure deſerve Your Protection.

Your Lordſhip's *Zeal* for the *Proteſtant Intereſt*, has been thro' a long and happy Succeſſion of Years, eminently conſpicuous; and the Favourers of *Rome*, have been as eminently reſtleſs and vigorous, in their Endeavours to brand and diſgrace you for it, with the *odious Names* of *Schiſmatick* and *Fanatick*.

But yet, notwithſtanding the Malice of the baſe unthinking Multitude, Inſtruments in the Hands of *deſigning, crafty Leaders*; and maugre the *ſpightful Attempts* of *Men in Power*; Your

Lordship's Fidelity and strict Adherence to the Cause of Truth, has still remain'd unshaken; not having, with others of your Lordship's Rank, *alter'd your Note when your Turn was serv'd.*

By this your Lordship has gotten to your self (and not undeservedly) the glorious Names of *Christian* and *Protestant*, given you by all wise and good Men: As your *Exemplary Zeal* for the late *Happy Revolution*, and the present Government *settled thereupon*, has acquir'd you the Character of *Loyal* and *Honest Patriot*, given you by all *dutiful* and *good Subjects*.

And that you might be wanting in nothing, to render you *truly deserving* of those great and honourable Names, your Lordship has always extended a *vast* and *comprehensive Charity*, towards those who dissent from the *Establish'd Church*, out of Principles of Conscience and not of Politicks.

These Reasons my Lord, have potently wrought me to dedicate the following Treatise to your Lordship, whose candid Treatment of 'em, I have not suspected.

But my Lord, whilst I am praising your Exemplary Life, as a Christian, a Protestant, an Englishman and Subject, the World will think I am writing a Panegyrick instead of a Letter: I will therefore cease to enumerate those many excellent Vertues, which have induc'd me to chuse their Possessor for my Patron.

At a Time, *when* what was formerly not so much as *suspected*, begins to *appear openly*, and by Degrees is still growing higher, and will at length grow to a perfect Height (if not nipt in the

the Bud) 'tis but Reason, that with all Diligence we set ourselves to *prevent its taking Head*, for then it will be *masterless* and *unruly*.

THAT which I am speaking of, had its apparent Beginning some few Years agoe, when such a Thing as a SACRAMENTAL TEST, was not only *propos'd*, but *enforc'd*; a Thing which without Horror and Amazement could not have been imagin'd; and which one wou'd think, shou'd never have pass'd *Both Houses*, especially not the *Upper*, where so many *Grave* and *Pious* Fathers were to pass Verdict upon it.

Not to insist upon the Impiety, of prostituting and abusing such an *Holy Ordinance*; which was (in Effect) sending Men to the Devil by Law: I might consider the *Inhumanity* and *Barbarity* of it, manifest in these Particulars.

1. The *Persons* against whom 'twas design'd.
2. The *Means* by which 'twas perpetrated.
3. The *Instruments* or Promoters of it.
4. The *End* propos'd to be serv'd by it.
5. The *dismal Effects and Consequences* of it.

'Twere too much, to speak of these Things singly, and as they deserve to be spoke too. In the Grosse, My Lord, (as you are not insensible) it was chiefly design'd *against* the * *Reformed Interest* in general; the effectual Way of ruining us, then being thought to be (as now) the *Dividing* of us among our selves. Scripture and Reason tell us, that *a Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand*; and the *Papists*, who

* Principally Protestant Dissenters: *The Naked Truth*, p. 6. written by *G. Bate*, 1688.

were

were *set on Fire of Hell*, and inſpir'd by the ſubtil Enemy of Chriſt's Kingdom, never wanted their Father's Inſtructions, nor were unacquainted with the effectual Means of deſtroying and enſlaving us.

Their Deſigns wou'd have been ſeen too plain had they firſt ſet upon the *eſtabliſh'd Church it ſelf*; and therefore they employ'd the moſt crafty Emiſſaries, to *inſinuate Jealouſies* concerning Diſſenters; as that they deſign'd the Subverſion of *Church* and *State*, to make one a *Commonwealth* by putting down *Monarchy*, and the other a *Popular Synagogue*, by diſſolving the *Hierarchy*.

Now, notwithſtanding theſe Things were utterly falſe and ſcandalous; Diſſenters aiming at nothing *ſo much* as the Honour of God, and Good of their Country: Yet (as Fulſhood generally meets moſt Favourers) the *Ignorant* Swallow'd down theſe things as plain Truths; others, out of *Envy* or *Love* to Popery, having ſuffer'd their Paſſions to run away with their Senſes, *joyn'd* in, or *conniv'd* at the Outcry.

What Violences were not done to the concelted Criminals? Impriſonments, Confiſcations, were *common*, and nothing but Burning was wanting, to equal the Cruelty of a *Spaniſh Inquiſition*.

Any reaſonable Body wou'd imagine, that when they ſaw Enemies *buſy* to *divide* us, and making *Parties* among us, it was with Intent the more eaſily to *ruin* us; and conſequently provide againſt it, by a *charitable* and *Chriſtian* Love to one another, and Regard to each others Safety. But the *Contrary* went *ſtrenuouſly* for-

forwards, Men were glad of any Occasions offer'd, to quarrel with Fanaticks (as they call'd 'em) so much was *Rome* too cunning for 'em; they cou'd not see the Hands that *clapt*, and set them on to *worry* and *devour* one another; 'till good Providence rather than good Cunning, detected the Knavery.

'Tis worth Notice however, that many who cry'd against *Dissenters from the Church*, were themselves of *no Church*; as some zealous High-Flyers now, who fight for the *Shadow* of Religion and loose the Substance. What happen'd after all this? My Lord, oppressed Vertue grew and increas'd; the Church of God like a *Palm-tree* depress'd or *Camomile* trodden, receives Vigor from Opposition; *Crescit sub pondere Virtus.*

With Pleasure I reflect upon the Disappointment of God's Enemies, whether open or disguis'd Papists: God design'd even then to raise him up a People, *who shou'd be for a Name and for a Praise*: These Enemies of God contributed to the performing his Purpose; not that I can accuse them of a too ready Obedience to his Will; but that it pleas'd him to bring his Decree to pass, by the most unlikely Means; *for they thought not so*: Their Purpose was to destroy, God's to build up.

But, My Lord, no Checks, no Disappointments, are able to discourage *Satan* and his *Agents*, again and again they reviv'd their Attempts; but Providence *preserv'd the Kingdom*, by securing the dispis'd Members of it, *from the Hands of their Enemies*, who seem'd *covertly*, great *Friends* to the Church. Ano-

Another Instance of *Romish* (I shou'd have said *Hellish*) *Policy*, was, sowing *Arminian* Doctrines in plenty, especially among the Dissenters, that the Convocation and Parliament observing it, might the more justly, and with better Pretext, be exasperated against them; for the *Papists* never *Plot*, but the *Dissenters* are the Betrayers first.

All *Englishmen* were jealous of the Popes Attempts, to introduce his Idolatrous Worship once more amongst us: The Country was sensibly alarm'd with the Discovery of their treacherous Designs, the *Court* suspected to have a Hand in it; These all help'd to give 'em an ill Opinion of those, who by zealously persecuting *Dissenters*, appear'd Friends to the Church.

British Parliaments look'd upon themselves in those Days, as *Guardians* of their Country's *Religion* as well as *Liberties*, they wou'd not *tamely give* 'em up, or *basely sell* 'em; they were above little, sordid, mercenary Ends, and as the Interest of their Country, merited their chief Regard, were as assiduous to *unite* (all its Members) more firmly, as their Enemies to divide them. The Resentments they shew'd towards *Papists*, and the Rewards given at their requests, to Discoverers of Popish Conspiracies, strenuously witness for 'em, what Danger they conceived, not only to the *Church* as Establish'd, but to the *Reform'd Religion* in general, all over *Europe*.

They not only discountenanc'd, but severely proceeded against all (even their own Members) who endeavour'd to insinuate in them, or in the

the People, a Hatred of the *Presbyterians*; as may be ſeen in their Votes, * where we ſhall read of *Expulſions*, *Impriſonments*, *Fines*, *Reprimands*, &c. for no other Crime than ſaying, There was no Popiſh, but a Presbyterian Plot.

Yet, my Lord, I do not attribute any of theſe Deſigns, or any of theſe pernicious Practices, to the Wiſdom or Fury of ſuch Men, as our *Modern Tories* are: No, a *Modern Tory* is of himſelf, a poor, harmleſs, ſimple, inſignificant Tool; *the Cat's Foot of Rome*; who neither thinks his own Thoughts, nor ſpeaks his own Words, but being wholly actuated by the deep, ſagacious Pates of others, ſpends his Life and Wealth, to promote an Intereſt he underſtands nothing of.

If Engliſhmen cou'd act without Paſſion, in Matters of religious and civil Government, we ſhou'd find them as much as any People, ſtudying Self-Preſervation: And indeed, there are

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* *Votes of the Houſe of* Commons, *Anno* 1680. *paſſim*, P. 11, 12. Sir *Robert Cann* is order'd to be expell'd the Houſe, and committed to the Tower, for declaring in the City of *Briſtol*, in *October*, 1679. That there was no *Popiſh*-Plot, but a *Presbyterian*-Plot. *P.* 112. Sir *Rob. Peyton* is order'd to be expell'd the Houſe, and to be taken in Cuſtody of the Serjeant at Arms, for having Negociations with the *Duke of* York, *&c.* when they were endeavouring to turn the Popiſh Plot upon the Proteſtants. *P.* 128. Reſolved, *Nemine Contradicente*, That *R. Thompſon* Clerk, has publickly defam'd His Sacred Majeſty, preach'd Sedition, villified the Reformation, promoted Popery, by aſſerting Popiſh Principles, decrying the Plot, and *turning the ſame upon the Proteſtants*, &c. and that he be impeach'd thereupon. See alſo the 2*d*. Paragraph in *p*. 146.

two ſorts of Men (each Species very comprehenſive) who, one wou'd think, ſhou'd be very zealous againſt *Popery*; Landed-Men and Tradeſmen: every Body knows, that moſt Eſtates in theſe Kingdoms, wou'd be deem'd Parts of St. *Peter's Patrimony*; Traders muſt expect heavy Taxes; there are vaſt Sums with Intereſt to pay to *France* and *Rome*; of which, notwithſtanding the Jubilee they wou'd keep (perhaps) for our Reconciliation to them, not one Farthing wou'd be remitted or forgiven.

Some of the Clergy, who ſtand up now ſo high for the *Dignity of the Prieſthood*, wou'd be unwilling to turn out of their Livings, or be degraded. But to be plain, my Lord, I am apt to think of many among us, that were their Eſtates and Titles ſecur'd to them, they'd freely take up with any Religion.

Theſe things I have mention'd, without having Regard to the Order of Time, in which they happen'd; by them we learn, who exaſperate Churchmen againſt Diſſenters, and for what End: We are caution'd hereby, againſt giving Heed to the *Violent Noiſes* of thoſe, who like the *Jews* of old, cry out, *The Temple of the Lord! The Temple of the Lord!* and are at the ſame Time *of the Synagogue of* Satan, *the Race of* Shimei, *the Tribe of* Iſſachar, *the Sons of* Cain. We ſee by theſe Things, whoſe Tools, whoſe Inſtruments they are, whoſe hot Heads cannot bear with the Name of *Proteſtant-Diſſenter*, but wink at *Popery*; who will not think of parting with *Abſolute Monarchy*, yet maintain *Ariſtocracy*; who deny to others *Liberty of Conſcience*, but take

take to themſelves *Liberty of Concupiſence*; who call pious praying by the Spirit, *Cant*, but ſwearing and curſing, *fine Breeding*.

'Tis unaccountable, that ſo many in this Kingdom particularly, have ſo great a Love for Perſecution, that tho' they run a Hazard of ruining themſelves and Poſterity to all Intents and Purpoſes, yet, rather than be ſtill, riſe up againſt their Brethren: But, my Lord, when I conſider the Pride and Envy of ſome *(Scribes and Phariſees)* who ſit in *Moſes* Seat (I mean Teachers of *Iſrael*) it much abates my Admiration: My Lord, I dare aſſert, becauſe I believe I can prove it, by Teſtimony and Examples, that the Clergy have been and are the Ruin of Religion.

For my Part, I am ſenſible, that the Pride and Tyranny of the Biſhop of *Rome*, have been the rending and tearing of Chriſt's ſeamleſs Coat, into ſo many Thouſand Pieces; have ſpill'd the Blood of ſo many Millions; have been the Foundations of ſo many Treaſons, Regicides, Maſſacres, Perſecutions, Wars, *&c.* Inſomuch, that it need be a Prayer for ever, *From Eccleſiaſtical Tyrany and Pride*, Libera nos Domine.

'Tis eaſie to prove, that the Beheading of K. *Charles* I. was owing to the OVER-ZEAL of Archbiſhop *Laud*; and what elſe but Romiſh Pride, firſt humbled, then poyſon'd K. *John*, and ſtab'd the *two Henrys* of *France?*

Among theſe things, I wou'd have mention'd the Struggle concerning the *Occaſional Bill*, formerly, and how eaſily it paſs'd now: But that

I am oblig'd to ſhorten, leaſt inſtead of a Letter, I write an Hiſtory.

I proceed more particularly, to juſtifie the Title I have given to this *Letter*, viz. Concerning *The Intereſt of England, in Reſpect to Proteſtant Diſſenters.*

* All ſuch my Lord, who do not concur with thoſe Men, whoſe Ambition is yet diſſatisfy'd, tho' they have put down and diſplac'd the Loyals't of Subjects, and beſt of Patriots; all thoſe I ſay, who do not join with them, how manifeſtly ſoever their Actions (to all thinking Men) tend towards *Rome*, and a *Popiſh Pretender*, are charg'd as factious and ſeditious, and to be of the Forty One Leaven; partly for that they ſeem not willing to give up their Liberty ſo eaſily, and with as little Noiſe as others can, and partly for another Reaſon, not pretended, but ſufficiently known, *viz.* their commendable Zeal againſt *Popery*. And to obviate and render uſeleſs, their pious Endeavours to propagate Goſpel Knowledge, and their conſtant Care for the *Proteſtant Intereſt*; the High-Flyers give out, that their Abhorrence of *Popery*, is Zeal for their own Peculiarities, for their dividing way, and for thoſe Things wherein they differ from the Church; whereas Diſſenters have always been contented with a *Toleration*, and never aim'd at *Eſtabliſhment*.

'Tis Deſtructive of common Senſe to ſuppoſe, that *Diſſenters*, who are (tho' numerous)

* *Defence of the Charter, &c. of* London, *p.* 16, 17.

the

the much leſs Part of the Nation, can ſo much as imagine their own religious way ſtrengthened and confirmed by deſtroying the Church of *England*, except at the ſame they cou'd unite all its Members in their Intereſt. But as this is unlikely and impracticable, ſo the other is impoſſible: For they muſt imagine, that the Eſtabliſh'd Church being entirely of another Intereſt (or ſuppoſe wholly deſtroy'd) they will be of themſelves the leſs able to withſtand the Inundation of *Popery* and an *Arbitrary Prince*, which muſt of Conſequence meet with leſs Reſiſtance, finding the Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf, and rent to Pieces.

* But 'tis now come to that Paſs, that no Man's Reaſon is regarded; the true State of Things, and our own preſent Condition, the Arts of our Enemies, and their Deſigns, are not conſider'd: But whatever we ſay or do, is *Fanaticiſm*, and ſavours of Forty One. By this Artifice they tie together a ſort of Men, that conſider little, and make of 'em an *obſtinate* Party, which they act, engage, and manage, in Courſes directly tending to their own Ruin, with a total Neglect of Rights, Laws, and ancient Conſtitutions: Nay, they endeavour to ſubvert them all, that they may more certainly and ſpeedily arrive at the Miſchief deſign'd by our Enemies.

By what has been ſaid, 'tis plain, my Lord, that thoſe who are truly pious and zealous Members of the Church of *England* ought to

* *Defence of the Charter*, &c. *of* London, *p.* 17, 18.

tolle-

ollerate and countenance the Diſſenters, which make ſo conſiderable a Body of Men, becauſe our Enemies Deſigns upon us wou'd meet the leaſt Reſiſtance, when they are divided from 'em, or deſtroy'd: And the more, becauſe the very Way the Papiſts endeavour to ruin you by, is dividing us from You.

We learn too, by a Parity of Reaſon, that the Diſſenters in point of Intereſt and Politicks, cannot endeavour an Alteration of the State Government, or the Subverſion of the Hierarchy, and 'tis impoſſible (theſe things being performed) that they ſhou'd be more ſecure from Popery, which is what they aim to defend themſelves againſt.

And now, My Lord, we come to conſider the Caſe of Proteſtant Diſſenters, in Relation to publick Offices and Employments under the Government; this Privilege including (in ſome Meaſure) all the others which they deſire or have a Right to.

The Queſtion I ſuppoſe may be this; *Whether it be the Intereſt of* England, *to employ Proteſtants diſſenting from the eſtabliſh'd Church, in the Government of the State?*

If the Negative appear, I muſt own the late Legiſlator did well (I mean prudently) to take away that common Liberty from them; tho' ſomewhat unequally, to leave them liable to all chargeable and troubleſome Offices, as tho' they were made for Drudges, to ſhare the Diſadvantages, but not the Profits of the Kingdom.

But I hope to prove the contrary to be both Reaſon and Duty, in conſidering,

I. That

I. That *Diſſenters* ſeparating from the *Eſtabliſh'd Church*, is no reaſon why they ſhou'd be excluded from the Service of the State.

II. That it is the Intereſt both of the *Government* and of the *Church*, to treat the *Diſſenters* with Lenity and Moderation.

I. To the *Firſt* Head, it may be ſaid in general, the Laws of Nature and Reaſon are as ſtrong for employing the Diſſenters as others; for *Firſt*, the Laws of Nature have made no *External Difference* between Church-men and them; the outward Appearances cannot be made a Means to diſtinguiſh 'em: They have alſo the ſame *internal Qualifications* as other Men, and the like *Moral Right*.

Whilſt I am ſpeaking thus, it may be objected, That *the Diſſenters are a diſpis'd and abandon'd Faction*: To which I anſwer, that this is rather a *Defect* than an *Effect* of Nature, for ſhe never made a Race of People for Slavery, any more than ſhe has created *One* to rule deſpotickly over the Lives, Wills and Fortunes of others: Such things as theſe, are to be look'd upon as Phænomenas and Forerunners of that Time, when *Nation ſhall riſe up againſt Nation, and Kingdom againſt Kingdom; when every Man's Sword ſhall be turn'd againſt his Brother, and a Man's Enemies ſhall be thoſe of his own Houſe.*

And as *Nature*, ſo *Reaſon* pleads ſtrongly in their Favour; for if ſome Perſons are to be excluded Civil Offices, or Civil Rights, it muſt be

Becauſe

Because they are destructive to 'em; Unfit for 'em; Or unwilling to undertake 'em.

1. First then, Dissenters are not destructive of the Government, for then it wou'd follow, that they are Enemies to Church, or State, or both.

If they were Enemies to the Church, they wou'd either manifest this Enmity, or they wou'd not: If they do not, then there is no Reason why it shou'd be objected against them; but if they do or do not, their Enmity must be accomplish'd, or end in the Ruin of *both*.

The Ruin of the Church must be accomplish-ed by establishing Heretical Doctrines contrary to Scripture: For if these remain, and the Profession of Religion made, is according to them, 'tis not the Church but the Form that's alter'd; so that the Church of *England* wou'd still remain, only the things that caus'd the Separation wou'd be taken away.

From hence it necessarily follows, that these things are such, as without the Breach of God's Commandments, or good Order may be changed: Or that Dissenters for endeavouring to alter them in the establish'd Church (if they do endeavour it) are both impious and unmannerly, and destructive of Religion in general, as well as of the establish'd Church of *England* in particular.

Now here their Enemies are brought into an inextricable Difficulty, much like a Dilemma; For, granting that they are not Enemies to the Church and Religion, by attempting to alter

and

and abbrogate certain Ceremonies, then it will follow, that they may and ought to be ſet upon an equal Level with other Loyal Subjects, notwithſtanding that Endeavour: But if guilty, then it has been prov'd they attempt the Ruin of Religion in general, and conſequently deſtroy their own: This is a Contradiction, unleſs we can ſuppoſe Diſſenters to be (as modern High-Flyers are) zealous for that they know nothing of, and care not for: 'Tis Madneſs to ſay, they wou'd take away Abuſes of Things, when they value not the Things themſelves.

So that Proteſtant Diſſenters cannot be Enemies to the Church, but by raiſing Schiſms in it, by promoting, propagating, and eſtabliſhing Tenets contrary to God's Word: But they have been vindicated from any ſuch Charge as this, by many able and learned Pens.

As Diſſenters are not Enemies to the Church, becauſe they endeavour not the Alteration of principal Matters of Faith or Practice, no nor the Eſtabliſhment of their own political Church Government, but only a Toleration of, and Impunity for profeſſing their own religious Way.

Neither are they Enemies of, or deſtructive to the *State*, in any Inſtance, other than as the late Parliament has made them to be, by rendering them uſeleſs Members of it; for it may be truly ſaid, *De non entibus, & de non apparentibus eadem eſt ratio*, they do not appear Friends, becauſe not ſerviceable, and therefore are Enemies: But I appeal to God, Angels and Men, if there be any thing like Juſtice, Religion, Honour and Honeſty in this, to make a People

by Law incapable of ſerving, and *by Law* after that, condemn 'em for not ſerving.

But to go on; If Diſſenters are Enemies to the State, all that can be expected from them, wou'd be an Alteration of the Government, from a Monarchy to a Common-wealth: For the eſtabliſhing themſelves in the higheſt Places, is no more than what from Nature and Reaſon (if Right be done 'em) they ſtand as fair for as others, under even Monarchical Government; ſo that their Enmity to the State cannot proceed from this Ground.

Nor wou'd their Advantages in civil or religious Liberties, be more extenſive under *Ariſtocratical*, no, nor under a *Democratical* Adminiſtration than now: For they cou'd but enjoy Privileges in Equality with others *then*, and if Juſtice take its free Courſe, they ought to do ſo *now*.

But after all, granting that a Democratical or Common-wealth Government, wou'd be more advantagious to Diſſenters than Monarchical, yet 'twou'd be difficult to prove them therefore deſirous of changing Governments; *Firſt*, in that there is no Appearance of any ſuch Deſire, and (as I obſerv'd before of another thing) *De non entibus, & de non apparentibus idem eſt ratio*. *Secondly*, becauſe it is utterly inconſiſtent with common Prudence, that *they* [*viz.* the Diſſenters] who, are comparatively but a Handful, deſtitute of civil or military Authority, labouring under the *Opprobiums* caſt upon 'em by their Enemies, and the Hatred of the Vulgar, ſhou'd ſecretly or openly deſign to attack a much more numerous Body, well furniſh'd

niſh'd with every thing neceſſary for a vigorous Defence.

But the Tories, whether it be becauſe they cannot prove, that the Diſſenters are endeavouring to change the Form of Government, from Monarchical to Democratical; or out of a Love they have to Self-contradiction, charge *them* with a Deſign *to bring in the Pretender.* The Oracle of that Party ſpeaks thus, *I verily think, that if the Pretender be ever brought in, the Whigs are his Men.* " * He is a pretty *Thinker*, " that's certain; and thoſe Men that carryed " the *Abdication*, and ſettled the *Succeſſion* (I " may add, and which High-Churchmen hate " for that very Reaſon) are juſt as likely to " bring in the Pretender, as ſome others who " ſhall be nameleſs, are to keep him out ". But this may ſerve to ſhew us, that the Tories are the Monopolizers of Senſe and Reaſon, and in their *impoſing Humour*, may put upon us what they pleaſe.

My Lord, wou'd People be perſwaded to believe their Senſes, and ſo look on others without the Vail of Prejudice, I am poſitive it muſt be concluded, that the Intereſt of Church and State is ſo exquiſitely and intricately interwoven, with that of other Proteſtants, that tho' diſſenting from 'em in things *not eſſential*, and as to publick Affairs, *not material*, the one cannot go about to overthrow the other, unleſs at the ſame time they wou'd undermine themſelves.

* *Medly* No. 32.

I have now clear'd the Diſſenters from the heavy Charge, which ſome I am ſure, wou'd be glad to ſee prov'd upon 'em; I have ſhown that the Diſloyalty of which they are accus'd, is not what they deſerve, but what their Enemies maliciouſly and falſly ſuggeſt, to render them odious.

Thus then, they are not on this Account, to be excluded publick Employments of Profit or Truſt; notwithſtanding thoſe whoſe Intereſt it is to make them uſeleſs Members of the Common-wealth, do endeavour to blacken their Reputation, in order to cut them off from the Community and weaken it the more.

My Lord, I will here take upon me to turn the Tables; not that I deſign to retort upon High-Churchmen, the black and odious Names with which they have ſo often beſpatter'd the low Party, upon my own Strength, or in my Words, becauſe I may miſtake; I ſhall only crave leave to tranſcribe a few remarkable Paſſages and Notes which have come to Hand.

And the firſt Teſtimony of this Nature, is preſented to the World, in the *Key of the Cabinet for Princes*, July, 1710.

That Author, ſpeaking of the Addreſſes from the County of *Oxford* and Town of *Litchfield*, makes theſe Reflections, " All thoſe, ſays " he, who preſented ſuch Addreſſes, whilſt " they ſhew their Zeal for the Queen, and their " Adherence to her, diſcover ſufficiently at the " ſame time, that they look upon the de- " throning of their Kings as an Impiety, *&c.*" And at the Concluſion adds, " And yet they " dar'd

" dar'd to diſpoſe of the Crown, that (ſays " our Author) ſo lawfully belongs to *Him*, " [*viz.* the Pretender] in Favour of a *Foreign* " *Family*. This (ſays he) is the *ONLY* Mo- " tive, that has produc'd the Hatred which the " High-Churchmen have conceiv'd againſt the " Presbyterians, and Nonconformiſts. "

I have purpoſely left out what he had wrote in the Middle of his Reflections, as unneceſſary to my preſent Purpoſe, which is to ſhow, that in the Authors Senſe, our late Addreſſers and their Encouragers, are the Pretender's Friends: He tells us (tho' it be a Contradiction (almoſt) in Terms) that ſuch Addreſſers ſhow their Reſent- ment againſt thoſe, who were acceſſary to the dethroning K. *James*, whilſt they expreſs their Adherence to Her Majeſty. If it be ſuch an Impiety, ſuch Injuſtice, to dethrone a Prince that reigns ill, to *detain the Succeſſion from that Prince's undoubted Male-Heir, who has never violated any of our Laws*; where then is the Right that Her Majeſty has, to ſit upon theſe Thrones? Do we not all know, that the Crown was ſet upon the Heads of the late King and Queen, by a Parliamentary, not an Here- ditary Right? Was not the Succeſſion entail'd upon Her Majeſty and the Heirs of Her Bo- dy, or for Want of Iſſue, on the Houſe of *Ha- nover*, by the ſame Parliamentary Right? And what they *pretend* to applaud and extol, in the ſecond Inſtance, ſo impious and unjuſt in the firſt and laſt? and yet ſo it muſt be, or the Author I have quoted, miſtakes.

It

It appears too, that the *Tories* diſclaim having any Hand in the Revolution; " and *(as the* " *ſame Author does us the Honour to inform us)* lay " tacitly to the Charge of the Presbyterian-" Party, the Non-Conformiſts and Low-Church " Men, the turning out of King *James* II. Is it poſſible, that thoſe Men, who diſclaim their being concern'd in bringing about the *Revolution*, nay, who *thank God they'd no Hand in it*, can be in Love with ſuch a Settlement, as without it, had never been known or talk'd of in *England*? No, for we are expreſly told, that *this* (*viz.* excluding the Pretender) *is the Ground of that Quarrel which High-Church Men have againſt Diſſenters.*

However, the Biſhop of *Rocheſter*, in his Letters to the Earl of *Dorſet*, printed in 1689. ſays, p. 58. " 'Twill be ſufficient once for all, That " the main Body of thoſe who made ſo brave a " *Stand*, were all of the Church of *England*, and " the Principles on which they ſtood, were all " *Church of England Principles.*

We have here a Reverend Prelate teſtifying

That there was Reſiſtance at the Revolution.

That the Members of the Church of England *did oppoſe their Prince.* And

That they ſtood to the Principles of the Church *in ſo doing.*

Which (by the way) proves,

That the Doctrines of Abſolute Paſſive Obedience *and* Non-Reſiſtance, *are Doctrines inconſiſtant with the Dictates of Reaſon and Religion.*

That the great Aſſerters of theſe Slaviſh Doctrines, *have no Authority for them; nor were they ever able to ſtick to 'em.*

King

King *James* himſelf, in a Pamphlet publiſh'd by Authority, 1688. ſays, that *there were undutiful and diſloyal Reflections caſt upon him, by ſome of the Church of England, but yet, that he would not take that Advantage againſt their* Clergy, *that he might.*

He adds, *p.* 67. *Inſtead of acting according to their* QUONDAM *avow'd Doctrine of Paſſive Obedience, they fly in the Face of Authority.*

I may here take Notice, how much our Antagoniſts ſeem to eſpouſe the Pretender's Cauſe, when they declare their Reſpect for his Religion: 'Tis common with them to ſay, *I had rather be a Papiſt than a Presbyterian.*

That is, " * *Rather than be a Presbyterian,* " who believes and holds all the fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Faith; *I wou'd* " *be a Papiſt,* whoſe Tenets (as to many of " 'em) are utterly inconſiſtent with, and deſtructive of them.

Again, " † *Rather than be a Presbyterian,* who " readily takes the Oaths to the preſent Government (which (by the way) many of " thoſe ſort of Gentlemen refuſe to do) *I* " *wou'd be a Papiſt,* who not only refuſes to " ſwear Allegiance to it, but whoſe very ‖

* Double Deliverance a Double Bleſſing, *p.* 29.

† Ibid. *p.* 30.

‖ *V.* Crab. Tom. 2. Concil. *p.* 948. Alſo the III*d.* Canon of the 4*th. Lateran* Council, obliges all Secular Supreme Powers, *to take an Oath, publickly to extirpate all Hereſy.* And to this perhaps our Queen had an Eye, when ſhe told her Parliament (*Oct.* 27. 1705.) That *the Pretender is certainly engag'd to extirpate our Religion, as well as to reduce this Kingdom to Slavery.*

" Principles

" Principles prompt him to ſubvert and over-
" throw it.— But enough of this.

You may remember, my Lord, that I laid down *three Reaſons*, for which it were juſt enough, that ſome Perſons ſhou'd be depriv'd of the Liberties aforenam'd: The *firſt* I have diſcuſs'd; the *ſecond* is, *Incapacity*.

Under this Charge, I find not only *Diſſenters*, but *Churchmen* (whoſe Heads are not ſo hot as other People's) to be included.

I don't ſee, but that *if Diſſenters*, &c. *were as ignorant as the Tories make 'em, they wou'd be much eaſier brought to their Bow, than now they are*: Thoſe who are *unacquainted* with the Grounds of *Logick*, are as eaſily *vanquiſh'd* by a *falſe* as *true Syloginſm*: Might they not hope (if it were as they ſay) to *force* many Doctrines of theirs upon 'em, which now they can't ſo much as *defend?* Wou'd they not ſet up their dearly beloved *Paſſive-Obedience*, and that without any conſiderable *Oppoſition?*

I can't think, but that it is owing to the *Skill* the Gentlemen of the Low-Party have, in the Fundamental Laws and Conſtitutions of our Nation, that they are ſo Vigorous to *Defend* their real and rightful Priviledges.

However, my Lord, if it be granted, that *many* of the preſent ſet of *Whigs*, are *ignorant Fellows*; ſhall we ſay of *all*, that they are ſuch? *Is there no Exception?* If there be, *why in ſo general Terms muſt all be excluded?*

And after all, allowing that *not one Whig* or *Diſſenter* in the Kingdom, is *fit* for a publick Employment; what, is Stupidity *entail'd* upon their

their Generation? Will not *ſome* that ſucceed them be fit? If they will, why, once more, *are all in general Terms excluded?*

Princes always found their People's Love their greateſt Safety; and thoſe who were willing to leave behind them, a Name Glorious and Immortal, have ever taken Care to ſecure it to themſelves, by rendring their Subjects *eaſie* under their Adminiſtration, *amicable* and friendly to one another. We never read in any Hiſtory, of Princes who encourag'd *one* Party, ſo frivolouſly and needleſsly divided as (perhaps) we are, to tear and devour the *other*, who, at the ſame Time had any juſt Pretence to Religion or Humanity.

We *never* (or rarely) find that Kings or States, have been *afraid* to entertain thoſe in their Services, who had the Misfortune *to diſſent* from them in Matters of Religion: The *Jews* were an Abomination to the *Egyptians*, yet *Joſeph* was advanc'd to the higheſt Dignity in *Pharaoh*'s Court; *Daniel* was not an Idolater, yet the Kings of *Babylon* were not afraid to advance him; and was it not *Mordecai* the Jew, that diſcover'd to King *Ahaſuerus*, the Conſpiracy his OWN Servants had made againſt his Life?

So far have the Kings of all Nations been from entertaining an ill Opinion of any, upon Account of Religion, that they never look'd upon it as a Principle to which they ought to have ſo great a Regard, as Men (now a days) dream of: I grant, that when this religious Profeſſion is *deſtructive* to the State, 'tis the

 higheſt

higheſt Prudence that the ſupreme Governor, be *cautious* of admitting ſuch into Employments, where their Power might be exorbitantly *hurtful*. And yet, even *Pagan Emperors*, in the Infancy of *Chriſtianity*, ſcrupled not to admit the *Chriſtians* into their Councils: I need urge only one thing more, that in the very Reign of *Charles* II. 'twas the ſettled Opinion of King and Parliament, that thoſe Laws by which *Papiſts* were depriv'd of Offices, of Arms, the publick Exerciſe of their Religion, Reſidence in or near *London*; I ſay, 'twas the Opinion of the whole Legiſlative Power, that thoſe Laws *ought not* to be *extended* againſt *Proteſtant Diſſenters*.

I cannot think any Body will be ſo mad, as, after I have freed them from the Charge of being *dangerous People in Power, or inſolent out of Power*; as to make the fooliſh Plea of Incapacity, with Reſolve to ſtick to it: For the Anſwer to this is ſhort and full. My Lord, *When it can be prov'd that the* Diſſenters *are not* fit *for publick Employments of Honour and Profit, I will be content they ſhou'd go without them.*

But even their Enemies own they are *by Nature capacitated*, or it were needleſs and fooliſh to render them *uncapable by Law*.

When it cannot therefore be ſaid, that *Diſſenters* are in any wiſe uncapable of ſerving the Government, thro' a Defect in them; it concerns thoſe who are zealous againſt employing them, to find out ſome Cauſe, that hath at leaſt the Appearance of Truth and Reaſon in it.

They

They ſay it wou'd caſt a foul Scandal upon the Members of the Church of *England*, that (ſeeing it is the Eſtabliſh'd Religion) all Offices are not confin'd to them, and them only: To chuſe Diſſenters (ſay they) wou'd inſinuate, that among the many Church Men, there are none fit for thoſe Employments. But in Anſwer, let me ask, what Reflection is it upon the Houſe of Lords, that a Prince ſometimes advances a Commoner to the higheſt Dignities, which belong more to them as PEERS, than any Offices, to any others, as CHURCH MEN.

I do aſſert, That *the Odds which ſome Men make between Diſſenters and Church-Men, has no real Foundation.* I have obſerv'd, that Nature made no Difference between 'em. " * Crea-" tures of the ſame Kind, are created to the " ſame Advantages; are originally equal.

The religious Way of one and the other, may, does, and poſſibly will for ever exiſt, without being detrimental to Religion or to the State, ſo long as each can be content to enjoy common Privileges; and in what then does conſiſt the Odds, that one Party muſt be more inhumanly treated than the other?

Pray give me leave to ask——What *Diſhonour*, what *Detriment* wou'd it be to *Church* or *State*, to have a *Diſſenting General*, or a *Diſſenting Stateſman?* Have not theſe Men, Fidelity, Conduct or Courage, requiſite for a *Sol-*

* Mr *Le Clerc*'s Extract, &c. on the Rights of the Chriſtian Church, p. 4.

dier? Have they not Wiſdom, Prudence and Secrecy enough to make a *Councellor?*

I proteſt, my Lord, 'tis ſtrange!—What ſhou'd be the Meaning, that ſo vaſt a Deffe-rence is paid to one Party more than another? Why 'tis this, " * If Diſſenters are turn'd " out of Employ, 'twill make Room for more " USEFUL Perſons.

" Very likely: For, *Non-Abdicators*, *Non-* " *Aſſociators* or *Non-Jurors*, or any thing elſe " that begins with a *Non*, are much more " USEFUL Men to ſome certain Purpoſes, " than *Non-Conformiſts.*

But becauſe there are ſome, who reckon none to be ſufficient Politicians (and ſo con-ſequently not qualified for eminent Places) who do not conform; 'twere worth while to conſider, whether ſome Great Men have at all improv'd their Intellects, by leaving their *firſt Love?* I don't find they have; tho' they had the Fall of a *corrupt Miniſtry* (as they call 'em) to take Warning by, yet we have found them wretchedly guilty of the ſame Faults † they blam'd in others; *out* in their Calculati-ons, *out* in their Politicks, *out* of every thing, but that Intereſt they *ought not* to be ſo much in.

I don't care to take upon me the Trouble of collecting all thoſe falſe, ſcandalous, abſurd Notions, which the Party are taught blindly and implicitly to believe, becauſe they are ſo

* An Eſſay upon the Intereſt of *England*, p. 21, 22.
† *V.* Short Hiſtory of the Parliament, 1713. *paſſim.*

many

many and ſo notorious, that themſelves begin to be aſham'd of them. Your Lordſhip in a Speech to the Lords, has excellently well, and as truly laid out, the Inconſiſtency of that almoſt exploded Doctrine of Paſſive Obedience, with the Pretences of Loyalty to Her preſent Majeſty.

To conclude; what I tell your Lordſhip, I tell the whole World, and I have all the Diſſenters in *England* on my Side; if after Trial, the Non-Conformiſts, ſuch of 'em as ſhall be employ'd, are found uncapable of that Office, let another more capable poſſeſs his Place, in God's Name: Only let not the Inſufficiency or Inadvertency of ſome, lay a Scandal upon all.

My third Head, my Lord, proves it ſelf; or wou'd ſoon do it, if it were try'd; Viz. *That Diſſenters are willing to ſerve the Government in all Offices.*

If there be any among 'em, who has the Modeſty to refuſe a good Place when 'tis offer'd him, *Datur digniori.* No one will repine at ſuch Uſage.

My ſecond General, may naturally be deduc'd from what I have already ſaid; and needs rather to be illuſtrated than prov'd.

For, If the Papiſts are endeavouring to divide us, in Order to ruin us; or if their Religion obliges them to extirpate ours;

And if it be the Intereſt of *England* to oppoſe them; as certainly Preſervation is:

If

If the ſureſt Way to baffle their Deſigns Is to unite our Force, the more vigorouſly to reſiſt;

If the Diſſenters are not Enemies to Church or State; but, their Ruin being dependant as well as others, are even on this Account engag'd in Prudence, to unite more ſincerely with other of Her Majeſty's Subjects;

If they are not only able, but willing to aſſiſt in Church and State, with Lives and Fortunes, which are, every one knows, conſiderable,

It follows,

That their Intereſt is ſo inextricably interwoven, as that the Deſtruction of one would be the Ruin of both.

Conſequently,

'Tis the Intereſt both of Church and State to uſe the Diſſenters with Juſtice, Lenity and Moderation, that they may by all the endearing Ties of Fellow-Chriſtians and Fellow-Subjects, mutually aid and ſupport each other againſt Hell, and *France* and *Rome*.

My Lord,

I am your Lordſhip's,

(&c.)

FINIS.